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Cincinnati
Citizens
Sabbath
Meeting
1868

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THE CIVIL SABBATH.

CHICAGO: LEVER

REPORT

OF A

COMMITTEE

Appointed at a Sabbath Meeting of the Citizens of Cincinnati,

MARCH 5, 1868.

CINCINNATI:

PUBLISHED BY THE SABBATH COMMITTEE,
DEPOSITORY 176 ELM STREET.

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PERMANENT SABBATH COMMITTEE.

Appointed at a public meeting, held in Hopkins' Music Hall, Cincinnati, April 23, 1868.

THOMAS F. SHAW,
ABNER L. FRAZER,
W. F. CHURCH,
- CHAS. W. ROWLAND,
E. L. JOHNSON,
J. H. FELDWISCH,
- DOCT. WM. NAST,
- SAMUEL J. BROADWELL,
- ROBERT MOORE,
THEODORE BAUR,
- J. H. WHITE,
- E. P. BRADSTREET,
REV. CONRAD SAUER.

Committee organized at a called meeting, held in the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association May, 12, 1868, by the election of THOMAS F. SHAW, Chairman. E. P. BRADSTREET, Recording Secretary. SAMUEL J. BROADWELL, Treasurer.

THE CIVIL SABBATH.



HE committee appointed at a Sabbath meeting, held in the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association, Cincinnati, March 5th, 1868, respectfully present the following report under the instructions of that meeting:

ON THE OBSERVANCE OF THE CIVIL SABBATH.

We submit it to all patriotic Christians, and to all good citizens, that there is a necessity for a *great reformation in civil society* in this city.

The prevalence of drunkenness, lewdness, gambling, frauds, thefts, robberies, assaults, murders, and suicides demands prompt, earnest effort on the part of every friend of humanity.

Taxes expended for the suppression of crime are every year growing more oppressive. It appears from the official report for the year ending February 28th, 1867, that the expenditures of this city to suppress vice, and punish crime, were, for the Police Court, City Prison, Work House, and Police service, three hundred and eleven thousand four hundred and twenty-six dollars and ninety-nine cents (\$311,426 99), whilst our expenditures for our excellent but expensive system of Free Schools, including Intermediate and High Schools, were only \$307,696 04. The total police expenditures, as above, for the year ending

February 29th, 1868, were \$418,390-91; whereas the salaries of all the teachers in the Common, Intermediate, and High Schools, both white and colored, for the same period, were only \$315,059 60. The police expenditures being one-third more than the educational.

Property and life are growing less and less secure. Every man's child is daily tempted, and in imminent peril of being sooner or later seduced into vice and crime, and ruined for life. We are steadily and rapidly going from bad to worse, and if good citizens do not awake and bring about a great reformation, society will ultimately become as degraded, vicious, and wretched as it is in Mexico, and in the worst of the South American republics, where liberty is only a name, and anarchy and crime the reality. Some of the most efficient causes of vice and crime in this city, are patent to all observers. Police officers enumerate 1817 places where intoxicating liquors are sold at retail in this city. And it appears from official information recently spread before the public, that in the Eastern district there is one place where intoxicating liquors are sold for every fourteen voters, and a fraction over.

It also appears from the city reports already quoted, that during the year there were 2,645 arrests made for drunkenness and for disorderly conduct,

springing, we suppose, almost exclusively from drunkenness. And the arrests for these two causes constitute two-fifths of all the arrests made. But drunkenness is not only in itself more prevalent and hurtful than any other vice, but beyond all this, it is often the known acknowledged parent of almost every other vice that curses society. It leads to theft, unchastity, assaults, and murders. It tends to break down order, and destroy peace in the home circle, and results in bringing up vicious children in the drunkard's family, ending in their own ruin, and the great detriment of society. It impairs physical energy, undermines every good purpose, unfits the man for providing for his family, and sends inmates to the Poor-house, the Orphan Asylum, the House of Refuge, and the jail, and greatly increases the burdens of all tax-payers and of all benevolent citizens.

Now we think that no fair-minded, intelligent observer will deny that one chief cause of drunkenness, and all its consequent crimes, all the week and all the year is the law-defying, selfish, inexcusable sale of intoxicating liquors on "the first day of the week called Sunday." On that day the masses abstain from common labor. They are at leisure, and their leisure is a temptation to drink. The toil of the week has superinduced a physical languor, and that suggests the excitement of stimulants. So that the drinking saloon which tempted all the week becomes a fourfold temptation on "Sunday."

In proof of the proposition that the isolation of the Sunday laws of the

State fearfully increases immorality and crime we need cite but two facts: We learn from the report of the Metropolitan Board of Excise, of the city of New York, for the year 1867, that during the thirteen months in which the law was enforced in *that city*, prohibiting the sale of liquors on Sunday, the arrests on that day were 2,514, while on the Tuesdays of the same months they were no less than 6,021, or more than double the arrests on the corresponding Sundays.

But in *this city*, where the statute of the State forbidding the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sunday is not enforced, the number of arrests on that day largely exceed the arrests on any other day in the week. In the months of June, July, and August of last year (1867), in this city, the number of arrests on Sunday were 821, whilst on the Tuesdays of the same months, it was only 403. The legitimate inference is that if we enforce the Sunday liquor law, the arrests on that day will not be half so many as on the other days of the week—if we do not enforce it they will be more than twice as many.

Tax-payers, good citizens, and Christians will certainly not fail to ponder the difference.

We further think that the common labor in which a portion of our citizens engage on this day of rest, is no inconsiderable cause of immorality and crime in this city. Men need a day of weekly rest in every land for calm reflection, for moral culture, for respite from week-day bodily and mental toil, but in this land, where there is so much excitement, so much physical exertion and mental toil, and where

every man needs some measure of mental strength, and of moral self-restraint, in order to act his part as a good citizen of a free government, we need it more than any other land.

These considerations plainly foreshadow

THE OBJECT OF THIS MOVEMENT.

We propose by the calm and fair presentation of facts and arguments to persuade, ultimately, all good citizens to sustain the "Sunday laws" of this State, so that, excepting in cases of necessity and charity, men shall not be permitted on the "first day of the week commonly called Sunday" to engage in *common labor*, or to *sell spirituous liquors*, to disturb the public peace, to increase the number of paupers to be supported at public expense, to crowd Police Courts and jails with the drunken, disorderly, and vicious, and to seduce and ruin the youth of the city.

But we wish it distinctly understood that when we speak of the enforcement by the prescribed civil pains and penalties of the "Sunday laws" of Ohio, we do it in full view of the fact that the statutes of the State do *not* require citizens to keep the day *holy*.

As Christians we have a profound conviction that it is a duty which all men owe to God to keep the Sabbath *holy*. And we would not have the church abate one jot or tittle of *her demand* that all men should obey the fourth commandment as it stands in the decalogue. But she can only enforce her demands by moral suasion, by the solemn sanctions of Holy Scripture,

and by the moral discipline of her members which the Bible enjoins.

When we would persuade our fellow-citizens who believe that the Bible is God's infallible law, we would expect to secure a more profound conviction concerning the propriety and necessity of enforcing the law of the State which merely requires rest on the Sabbath, by showing that God's law in the Bible also requires *rest* as well as holy observance. And we are not unmindful of the fact that it is only in those lands where the light of Holy Scripture shines, and where God's Sabbath law revealed in the Bible is known that men clearly discover the necessity in the very constitution of man's physical and mental nature for one day of rest in seven. But we maintain that where this light is enjoyed men have unquestionably made this discovery, and that on this ground alone, we have a right to enact and enforce civil laws requiring abstinence from labor and dissipations one day in seven, and that in so doing we make no encroachment upon the rational liberties or the rights of conscience of those even who deny the divine authority of the Scriptures.

THE "SUNDAY" LAW OF THE STATE OF OHIO.

The law of the State which we propose finally to enforce, reads thus:

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, That if any person of the age of fourteen years or upward, shall be found on the first day of the week commonly called Sunday, sporting, noting, quar-*

reling, hunting, fishing, shooting, or at common labor (works of necessity and charity only excepted), he or she shall be fined in a sum not exceeding five dollars, nor less than one dollar; Provided nothing herein contained shall be construed to extend to those who conscientiously do observe the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, nor to prevent families emigrating, from traveling; watermen from landing their passengers; superintendents or keepers of toll bridges, from attending or superintending the same; or ferrymen from conveying travelers over the waters, or persons removing their families on such days.

SEC. 2. That if any tavern-keeper or other person, shall sell or barter any spirituous liquors on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday (except to travelers on a Sunday), such tavern-keeper or other person so offending, shall be fined in a sum not exceeding five dollars.

A few considerations will present the equity and reasonableness, if not the necessity, for this law in a convincing light:

1. This law only forbids common labor, and such other things as are as exhausting physically as common labor. Whatever may be true of God's law in the Bible, the law of the State forbids no one to read any book, to visit friends, to walk in the fields, or to engage in any quiet indoor recreations.

2. It makes very large exceptions in favor of travelers, emigrants, toll-keepers, ferrymen, and all works of necessity and charity.

3. It makes explicit exception in favor of all who conscientiously observe the seventh day of the week as a day of rest. If the Jew or Seventh-Day Baptist rests on Saturday, he can

engage in common labor "on the first day of the week, called Sunday."

4. It oppresses no man's conscience; for no man can reasonably claim that, in ordinary circumstances, it is a *duty* he owes to God, to work at common labor every day in the week. Nor can any saloon-keeper persuade us that his *conscience* tells him it is a *Christian duty* to carry on his Sunday traffic, ruining the souls and bodies of his victims, and doing incalculable damage to the State.

5. This law is not in any sense a sumptuary law. Sumptuary laws prohibited extravagance in eating or drinking in the privacy of men's homes. This law takes no cognizance of what men eat and drink at home. It only requires the liquor-seller to stop his traffic on "Sunday," which is notoriously hurtful to the individual and the State every day of the week, but doubly injurious on this day of rest.

6. It favors no religious sect, Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Christian, Presbyterian or Seventh-Day Baptist.

7. It is not in the slightest degree a union of Church and State, for it enforces no merely religious duty. It does not enjoin prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, attendance upon church, baptism, or the Lord's supper, or the keeping *holy* of the Sabbath in any way, either in private or in public.

The courts of the State have held—"That the Sunday law could not stand for a moment as the law of this State if its sole foundation was the duty of keeping that day holy, and its sole motive to enforce the observance of the duty. It is to be regarded as a mere municipal or police regulation, having no connection with religion, and whose

validity is neither strengthened nor weakened by the fact that the day of rest it enjoins is the Sabbath day.”—*Bloom v. Richards*, Ohio St. Rep. 388.

And we may add that as the fact that the Bible and the church have laws forbidding theft and murder, is no reason why the State should not enact laws against the same crimes, so if observation and experience teach us that the good of the individual and the well-being of the State require one day each week, of rest from common labor, and of abstinence from corrupting dissipation, it is not a sufficient reason why a law should not be enacted to this end, that it would coincide in some particulars with the law of the Bible concerning the Sabbath. We cordially approve and indorse the wisdom and justice of that section of the Constitution of the United States which provides that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” And we could not approve the “Sunday” laws of this State if they enforced by civil pains and penalties any merely religious duty, or if they provided for the pecuniary support of any religious denomination. But we do approve them; because we believe that if they were annulled, the working man would be compelled to do seven days’ work for six days’ wages—because our own observation teaches, and the most profound jurists and statesmen, and the most learned physicians and physiologists have affirmed, that it is a law of man’s being indelibly enstamped upon him by his All-wise Creator, that he should have one day in seven of rest

from common labor, and from exhausting dissipations, and because it is needed to afford opportunity for that moral culture, without which our free institutions can not be perpetuated.

In conclusion we beg leave to submit a few suggestions concerning the means of attaining the object contemplated:

1. In this movement we utterly refuse to enter into controversy concerning the minor details of Sabbath observance, about which good men have differed. The State accepts the conscientious observance of one day of rest in seven, whether that day be Saturday or “Sunday.” As good law-abiding citizens, we are willing to accept the observance of either day. As Christians we have our opinions, and claim the right to advocate them; but in any movement looking toward the enforcement of “Sunday” observance, we approve and stand by the law of the State and entirely ignore the question as to which day of the week is the better day of rest. We seek not by our proposed effort to determine what are or are not proper modes of conveyance to church on this day of rest, or how far it may be proper to worship God in the green fields on this day. All such questions we leave to individual conscience and the church.

2. And once for all, we utterly disclaim all compulsory measures in matters of conscience.

3. We distinctly disclaim any purpose to either aid or injure any existing political party. We hope to secure the co-operation of good men of all parties.

4. We propose in this movement to

form and to unite a sound patriotic public sentiment in favor of the observance of the civil Sabbath, as it is enjoined by the wise, reasonable and liberal enactments of this commonwealth; in order that we may not become utterly demoralized as a people, and ultimately forfeit our liberties.

We know that it is useless in a free republican government for a minority to attempt to enforce laws, however salutary, if there is a large majority determined to resist them. But the "Sunday" laws of this State are so moderate, wise, and necessary, and their violation so selfish, and wicked, and so fruitful in crime and wretchedness, that we have an abiding confidence that a reliable majority of our citizens everywhere in this land will

sustain this beneficent law, whenever we can secure thoughtful consideration of the facts and well organized co-operation. When we abandon this hope, we shall give up all expectation of perpetuating good order on the one hand, and rational individual liberty on the other.

To carry on and give direction to this movement, we propose, in accordance with the directions of a previous meeting, to nominate, this evening, a permanent committee of reputable, influential, and patriotic citizens, who believe that the dearest interests of our children, and the most vital interests of the State, are involved in this issue, and we pledge them our cordial, earnest, persistent co-operation.

THOMAS F. SHAW, *Sec.*

W. C. McCUNE, *Chm. Tem. Com.*

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